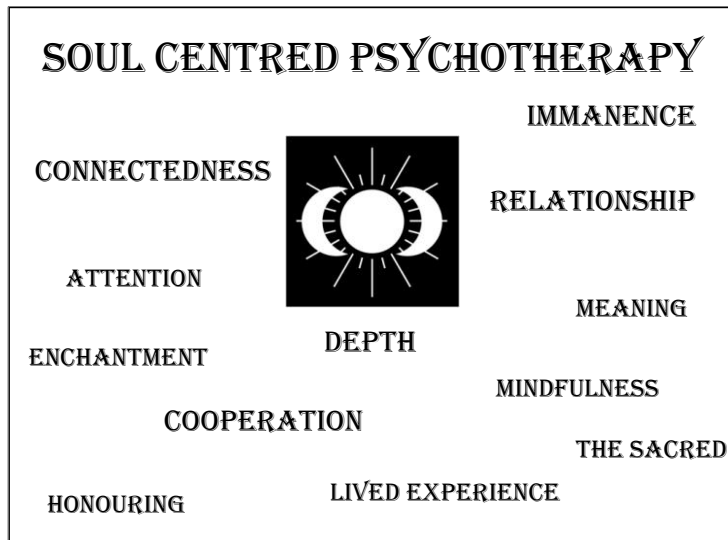


Soul Centred Psychotherapy – Healing the Soul

Paper presented at the 2015 ASPA Conference, May 17, Sydney, by Lindy Rockman and Rena Hoffman on behalf of the Association of Soul Centred Psychotherapists (ASCP), the Kairos Centre, and the Soul Centred Psychotherapy community.



In the 1980's the co-founders Kaalii and Andrew Cargill developed a therapeutic modality called Soul Centred Psychotherapy. Kaalii and Andrew had training and experience in social work, counselling, humanistic psychotherapy, body-oriented psychotherapy, the women's conscious raising movement, and East/West spiritual practises. Soul Centred Psychotherapy is based on the experience of psychotherapy as therapia (healing) of psyche (soul) and on principals of relationship, cooperation and connectedness with self, others, and the World. This combination, and resonance with the collective emerging consciousness, led to a philosophy and practice focusing on the following elements:

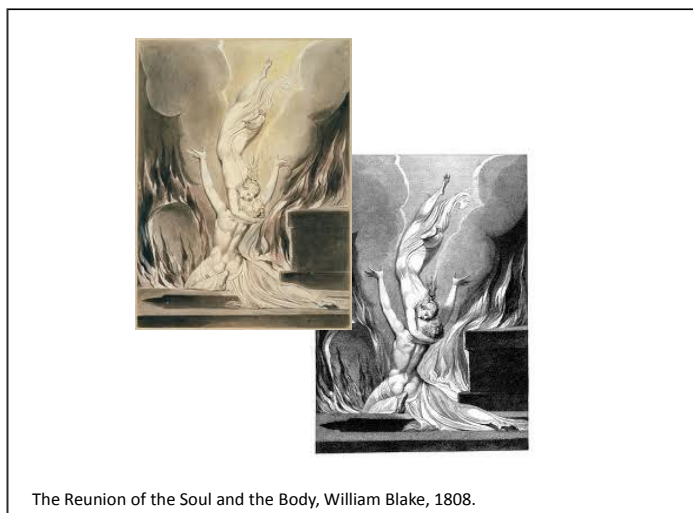
- Relationship- with self, other, and the World
- Mindfulness- soulful presence
- Attention- The capacity to be fully present with therapeutic attention is not a given, and this is core component of the Soul Centred Psychotherapy training. Therapeutic attention involves moving between focused and panoramic attention, ranging between attending to the other, noticing one's own responses, and sensing the energetic field between client and therapist.
- Lived experience- connected embodied experience that is not just cognitive. Responses to life are the stuff of soul.
- Meaning- subjective meaning for the client- what does this mean for each person rather than any external ideals of health or happiness.

- Honouring – engaging psyche with respect for the integrity of each person’s experience (not pathologising).
- Enchantment – mystery in which we find value.
- The sacred - a sense of connection with that which is indwelling in all life - the World Soul /Anima Mundi; resonant with Jung’s idea of the Self as the central organising principle of the psyche

It is the focus on these elements which differentiates Soul Centred Psychotherapy from other approaches, which may refer to similar theoretical material or use similar therapeutic techniques.

Soul Centred Psychotherapy involves the therapeutic relationship between therapist and client as well as each person’s relationship with him/herself and with the World. We call ourselves Soul Centred Psychotherapists because it reflects the underlying principles of relationship, immanence, and depth that we associate with soul.

We enter into the therapeutic space not knowing what is going to emerge from the depths of each person’s psyche. What is indwelling that is calling for attention? In terms of contemporary psychotherapy, Soul Centred Psychotherapy is most closely linked to the field of transpersonal psychotherapy, the so called “fourth force” in psychology. There is however an important difference between Soul Centred Psychotherapy and many other transpersonal approaches in relation to transcendence.



Soul Centred Psychotherapy is fundamentally committed to the principal and experience of immanence. Fundamental to the understanding and experience of soul, immanence is that which is indwelling or inherent, “pervading the universe”.

“Call the world if you Please
‘The vale of Soul-making.’
Then you will find out the use of
the world . . .”

John Keats, 1810

Excerpt from Keat's letter, April 21, 1810, <http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/english/melani/cs6/keatsltr.html>

Soul Centred Psychotherapy is committed to relieving suffering, as can be the case in working with trauma. Soul Centred Psychotherapy is also committed to attending to soul as it comes present in people's lived experience. An example of this may be the painful yet deepening experience of grief and loss, which doesn't necessarily call for relief or healing, but may need soulful presence and support with self-soothing and engaging emotion.

True to the well known Gestalt quote: “the whole is larger than the sum of its parts”.

Soul Centred Psychotherapy may use one or more therapeutic interventions in a session, or it may be appropriate to simply be present with the other person's experience.

Soul Centred Psychotherapists are not prescriptive and do not assume that the same interventions will be useful for all clients. The Soul Centred Psychotherapy therapeutic tools are available (like data stored in the Cloud), moving from background to foreground as needed.

Soul Centred Psychotherapy can, however, be directive within a session in terms of inviting clients to experiment with words, enactment, creative expression, and other elements of therapeutic exploration. Soul Centred Psychotherapy is not just talking therapy.

Soul Centred Psychotherapy is also educational; clients are taught effective strategies for self-soothing and managing their mindbody systems between sessions and in an ongoing way in their lives.

Soul Centred Psychotherapy incorporates therapeutic techniques and interventions from other modalities, including Ericksonian psychotherapy and hypnosis; Jungian psychotherapy; humanistic psychotherapy; and energy psychology, adapting the interventions to the Soul Centred Psychotherapy orientation.

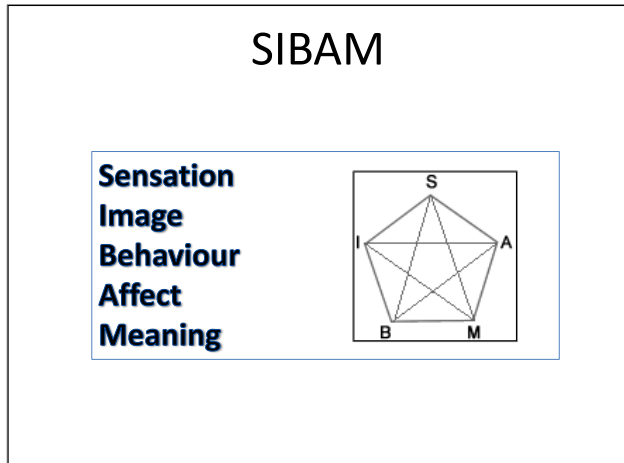
The therapeutic modalities used in Soul Centred Psychotherapy

- Mindfulness - soulful presence

- Attending to story; active listening - bringing present questions; VAK representational systems.
- Attending to sensory experience – non verbal expressions.
- Creative expression - mindbody communication; emotion as sensation and image; being present with bodily experience; creative expression.
- Therapeutic Trance – supporting communication between ego-consciousness and the unconscious; processing negative beliefs and old maladaptive patterns; accessing inner creative resources.
- Inner dialogue and active imagination.
- Working with Trauma – informed by trauma theory, brain mapping, energy psychology and includes interventions such as bilateral stimulation reprocessing and thought matrix meridian work.
- Working with Dreams- creative exploration of the living relationship with psyche /Psyche
- Working with archetypes and mythology – what archetype is missing?; writing a personal myth; mythology as teaching stories.
- Therapeutic ritual involves developing an enactment that includes 3 stages: relinquishing, crossing, and stepping onto new ground.
- As well as therapeutic interventions, there are theoretical maps for the therapeutic journey. Soul Centred Psychotherapy moves between the “maps” and being present in the moment with the client.
- Working with Defenses - Defense theory and Affect theory.
- Character structure, developmental trauma, and attachment theory.

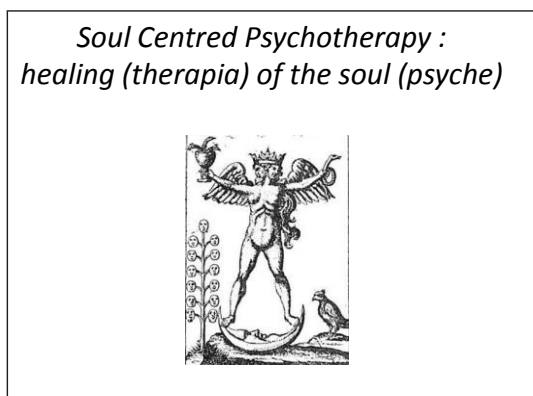
Brain mapping shows how trauma delinks parts of the brain and parts of experience. Soul Centred Psychotherapy works to re-link emotion, sensation, image, behaviour, and meaning.

You may be familiar with the SIBAM model:



Peter Levine’s SIBAM Model of Dissociation is based on the mindbody relationship, bringing together sensations, images, behaviours, affect and meaning to illustrate the neurological delinking (dissociation) that can result from a traumatic experience. Re-linking aspects of experience using imagery and sensation, feelings, thoughts and behaviours, offers the mindbody system options other than flight, fight or immobility.

We work with the client to form and strengthen the links between emotion, sensation, image, behaviour, and meaning, so there is more experience of space and choice around habitual behaviours and beliefs, and so there can be a deeper relationship with self, others and the World.



One of the ongoing discussions in Soul Centred Psychotherapy is whether psychotherapy should be about the treatment of some sort of dysfunction, or whether it should be a cooperative, creative work, a collaborative effort to deepen our relationship with the embodied experience of being human. The heart and soul of Soul Centred Psychotherapy is therapy that supports healing of the soul.

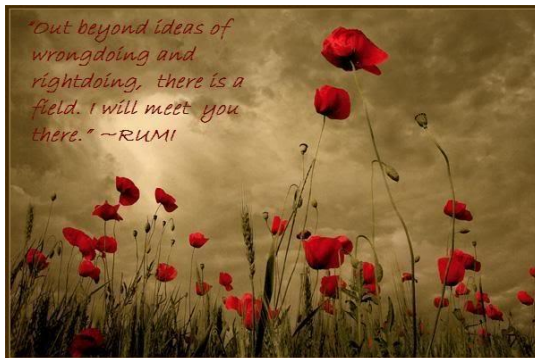
I leave you with this poem from Rumi:

The guesthouse

This being human is a guesthouse.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
Some momentary awareness comes
As an unexpected visitor

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
Who violently sweep your house
Empty of its furniture,
Still, treat each guest honourably.
He may be clearing you out
For some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
Meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.
Be grateful for whatever has been sent
As a guide from beyond.



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